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## THE TWO-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF WINCKELMANN.

THE year 1917 is not only the four-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Reformation, but also the two-hundredth of the birth of Winckelmann, the founder of scientific archeology and the father of modern art criticism. There is more of similarity in the work of Luther and Winckelmann, if both are judged by the influence which they wrought on posterity, than appears at first sight. While the one brought a complete change into the attitude of men's minds toward religion, teaching that an independent judgment is the inalienable right of every religious man, the other effected no less complete a change in the world of esthetics, by overthrowing the false taste in art and wrong conception of classical learning which obtained throughout Europe in his day, and by laying the foundations of a wholly new science.

In reading the biography of Winckelmann by Karl Justi<sup>1</sup> one feels that he is in the presence not only of one of the greatest scholars, but one of the greatest of men. His greatness as a scholar is indubitably attested by the scientific work which he left behind him, as well as by the influence which he exerted not only over his immediate contemporaries, but over the whole world of learning and culture since; his greatness as a man is no less clearly discernible in the infinite capacity which he possessed for

<sup>1</sup> *Winckelmann, sein Leben, seine Werke und seine Zeitgenossen*, 3 vols. Leipsic, 1865-72. 2d ed. 1898.

overcoming the almost insuperable difficulties of his early career until he reached his life's ambition. Nor was he only concerned with books and monuments, but with men, constantly seeking the help and inspiration of true friends, since he believed that friendship was the greatest of human virtues. For one born and schooled in adversity in an age and in an environment whose ideals were out of harmony with his very nature; for one who not only lacked the means to properly prosecute his studies, but the inspiration of contemporary science and art; for one who had never seen a genuine monument of ancient art until he had passed his thirtieth year; for such a one to have raised himself by sheer ability and industry to the highest place in European scholarship and to have been the means of completely reversing the attitude of his day toward art—all this discloses greatness of a rare order. For Winckelmann was not one of those fortunate mortals who are born in the lap of luxury, whose genius is slowly but easily unfolded throughout a long life and at the end crowned with great rewards; on the contrary he was of lowly birth and only with incredible difficulty accomplished his life work, and then was suddenly cut off by an appalling calamity after having barely passed his fiftieth year. His brief life was one of great contrasts in which the shadows and lights were about equally balanced—his journey to Rome in his thirty-eighth year dividing it into two distinct parts. It was the contrast of want and competence, of removal from the rudest environment to association with the world's best collections of art and intercourse with the greatest personalities of Italy and Europe, of being the teacher of recalcitrant village school children to becoming the preceptor of Europe and posterity. It is surely a life story well worthy our study and emulation.

To understand the character and significance of the change in the esthetic view-point wrought by Winckel-

mann's influence, we must understand how it was that Italian taste with its prejudice in favor of Latin studies over Greek and indifference to the latter had dominated Europe for two hundred years before his time.

The study of Greek, which had been so enthusiastically begun by the Greek immigrants and Italian humanists in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as well as the great period of Italian art beginning with 1300 and so intimately connected with the commercial prosperity of the free states of central and northern Italy, began to languish after the first quarter of the sixteenth century. This decline was primarily due to the loss of political independence in these states during the disasters which befell them in the time of Michelangelo. Italy, the fairest and richest of countries, then became the prey of foreign armies and could no longer under the leadership of the popes present a united front against invasion. An army of Charles V sacked the eternal city in 1527 and took Pope Clement prisoner; two years later Florence was besieged by another imperial army and by its surrender in 1530 lost its liberty, and by the reestablishment of the Medici in 1532 as hereditary dukes of the capital and later of all Tuscany, Italian freedom was doomed. From then on until 1796—over two hundred and fifty years—Italy had no political history of its own: its annals were filled with records of dynastic changes and redistributions of territories, and it became the theater of desolating wars fought for the most part by the armies of contending foreign princes and for ambitions in which the Italian people had no share. The brilliant aristocracies which had long cultivated humanistic studies were ruined and the predominant influence of the reformed Catholic Church looked with no friendly eye on the worship of pagan ideals, an attitude which was bound to divert Italy from classical learning. The Greek elements and influences in Roman art and letters had been so thor-

oughly assimilated at the end of antiquity by the Imperial Age of Rome that there were few Italians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who were aware of their independent Greek origin. The Mohammedans were holding Greek lands in thralldom, and no one visited them to bring back a truer knowledge to counteract the growing tendency to treat Roman studies as superior to Greek and to look upon them as original. Patriotism, moreover, naturally led Italian scholars to exalt their own country as the center of the old Empire of Rome. They knew Italy's debt to the Romans in both literature and art and enthusiastically imitated them without any critical idea that the Romans had largely copied the Greeks. The fact that Italian was descended from the language of Rome made it easy for them to unlock the treasures of Latin literature. Thus, generally speaking, it had come to be customary in Italy to ignore Greek studies and to prefer everything Roman, and this way of looking at things spread over all Europe until finally, in Winckelmann's century, Italian taste, founded upon a wholly mistaken historical conception, ruled all cultivated nations. The great Italian humanist, Julius Cæsar Scaliger, long before had declaimed against Greek in favor of Latin, and his book of Latin verses — the *Poetice* — which appeared posthumously in 1561, remained a standard of taste down into the eighteenth century. Though the French historian de Thou exalted him above all scholars ancient and modern for his learning and talent, we know that he only looked upon classical studies as an agreeable relaxation from the severer pursuits of life. In fact his chief amusement in later years was the composition of Latin verses. Thus within a century of Byzantium's fall, the Renaissance had already begun to take on in Italy its characteristic Roman bias.

In France the sixteenth-century Greek tradition inaugurated by Stephanus and Turnebus soon began to wane.

The French schools were deserted by Joseph Scaliger in 1593, by Casaubon in 1610 and by Salmasius in 1631. By the end of the seventeenth century classical enthusiasm had yielded to a taste which found pleasure in ridiculing Greek studies with characteristic Gallic wit. The age of Louis XIV,—the founder in 1663 of the Academy of Inscriptions—was marked in the years 1687-92 by the literary quarrel between Perrault and Boileau over the respective literary merits of the ancients and moderns. In his *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes*, Perrault, after a superficial survey of ancient and modern literature, gave the palm to the moderns. He declaimed not so much against the genius of the ancients as against their technique, the impersonal and objective character of their art. He compared Homer's immortal lays with the ballads of the Parisian street singers and looked upon his heroes as of lower stature than the dandies of Versailles, more like their landed thralls. His book was the signal to a controversy which passed over to England and again, in the days of Antoine Houdart de la Motte and Fénelon, returned to the land of its origin. La Motte, like his master, was an enemy of Greek and measured Homer by the rules of romantic French poetry. Voltaire, the dates of whose long life included those of Winckelmann's, expressed his sorrow that "the most beautiful language of the world" was neglected in France in his day. While praising the truth to nature and the descriptive power of Homer, he nevertheless found many unhewn stones in his marble palace and was content to set the second, fourth and sixth books of the Aeneid above not only the Iliad but all Greek poetry. He thought that the *Jerusalem Delivered* was at least the equal of the Iliad. He admired the dignity of Demosthenes, but looked upon the immortal Aristophanes as a mere *farçeur*. Plato did not please him because he made virtue too attractive and vice too repulsive; in his opinion Cicero was the equal

of any Greek thinker. Out of respect for his judgment of the Iliad we must remember that Voltaire also essayed to write an Epic, which, I fear, but few even of the professors of French to-day read with any pleasure.

In England humanism had not yet recovered from the effects of the Civil War. There was no great name in classical scholarship until that of Richard Bentley, who was destined to become the greatest figure in the learned world of Europe during the first half of the eighteenth century. Sir William Temple, who knew no Greek, nevertheless entered into the controversy begun across the channel and championed the ancients with his *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning*. A challenge to prolong the conflict was given by his statement that the best examples of Greek literature were the fables of Æsop and the letters of Phalaris, which he looked upon as nearly contemporary. The challenge was first accepted by Wotton, who, in his *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694), calmly examined Sir William's reasoning. His friend Bentley told him that the fables of Æsop were not the work of Æsop at all and that the letters of Phalaris were a late forgery, the work, perhaps, of a sophist of the second century A. D. Temple's advertisement made a great demand for these worthless letters, and a young Oxford scholar named Boyle published an edition in 1695. A second edition of Wotton's essay was followed in 1697 by Bentley's famous *Dissertation on Æsop and Phalaris*. Nothing can better show the real state of Greek studies in England at his time than the fact that for some time public opinion favored the enemies of Bentley; however, the second edition of his *Dissertation* in 1699 marked a new epoch in English scholarship by heralding a new era of criticism. We have interesting hints of how Greek was neglected at Oxford at this time in Macaulay's *Essay on Addison*. While Addison had an intimate knowledge of the Latin poets

and could write an excellent Latin style, his knowledge of Greek, though such as was deemed respectable at Oxford in his day, was evidently less than that which is carried away by many high school boys of to-day. An account of his Italian journey also shows how preponderating was his interest in things Roman.

In Winckelmann's own land classical studies had fared but little better. Their systematic study inaugurated in the fifteenth century by Huysman and continued by the labors of the humanists Reuchlin, Melanchthon and Camerarius had already begun to languish by the close of the sixteenth century. The leaders of the Protestant Reformation, Luther, Melanchthon and Zwingli, were all classically trained men whose minds had been broadened and whose powers of expression had been increased by the study of the Latin and Greek classics. Most of the Latin schools of the sixteenth century were founded under the direction of Melanchthon, and his educational plan was taken over by the universities which he reorganized. In his *Discourse on Reforming the Studies of Youth*, which he, a youth of twenty-one years, delivered as his inaugural as the first professor of Greek at Wittenberg, Melanchthon expressed his determination to plead the cause of the classics against those who found them "more difficult than useful" and who maintained that "Greek was studied only by disordered intellects and that, too, for display." His appointment at Wittenberg marked an epoch in German university education; for under this *praeceptor Germaniae* Wittenberg became the school of the whole nation. In laying aside the old scholastic methods of instruction, he showed that he had caught the real spirit of the Renaissance and was fitted to be one of its greatest leaders. In lecturing on Homer he announced that he, "like Solomon, was seeking Tyrian brass and gems for the adornment of God's temple" and he also asserted that "by going to the sources we are

led to Christ." But despite its glorious initial promise the Reformation was bound to react detrimentally on classical learning. Luther, though he began his work at Wittenberg with lectures on Aristotle's *Physics* and *Dialectics*, soon found his influence harmful to the new theology and came to look upon Aristotle as the personification of scholasticism, the great enemy of the Church. He, therefore, wished to banish the *Ethics* and *Metaphysics* entirely from the university curriculum and to retain only the *Rhetoric*, *Poetic* and *Logic*, because these works might help young men to preach and pray better. The whole Protestant principle in art, isolated by the cleavage from Italian influences, was destined to cut Germany off from the ancient tradition of beauty and culture. The Thirty Years War in the following century had, like the Civil War in England, a disastrous effect upon every form of learning and culture. With the peace of Westphalia in 1648 neither art nor classical learning revived. The age of the giants of humanism had passed. After the death of Camerarius in 1574 there was not a name of importance in German classical scholarship for a hundred and fifty years until that of Johann Albert Fabricius (died 1736) is reached, and he is to be remembered mostly only for his great learning and industry, which won for him the title of the modern Didymus. The Flemish philologist Justus Lipsius had long before heralded the decay of Greek studies by his dictum that Greek was merely an ornament which for a scholar was not an indispensable possession. Latin continued to be taught in Germany and was still largely the medium of university instruction and the language of the learned world. Ancient literature, however, was regarded everywhere as a barren field, quite superfluous to the scholar. In Winckelmann's boyhood Greek was nowhere seriously studied; what Greek was taught was mainly intended for students of divinity for the sake of the New Testament

and the early Church Fathers—that is, as the handmaid of theology. No Greek book of importance had been published for nearly a century and a half, from the time of Sylburg toward the end of the sixteenth century down to that of Ernesti, whose *Memorabilia* of Xenophon appeared in 1737. No Plato had appeared anywhere in Europe since 1602. No Greek text-books, except selections, were to be had. Scientific archeology was yet unknown and scientific philology was yet to be created at Halle by Wolf at the end of the eighteenth century. Porson's gibe that "the Germans in Greek were sadly to seek" was not without point. Only the seeds of the coming revival in Greek studies had been sown. Gesner, the older contemporary of Winckelmann, who was professor of eloquence at Göttingen for twenty-seven years until his death in 1761, was the first to re-introduce the best Greek classics into a German university, by publishing his *Chrestomathia graeca* in 1731 when Winckelmann was a boy of fourteen. This event really marked the advent of the new humanism by rekindling the national enthusiasm for ancient learning. It was Gesner's aim no longer merely to imitate the style of the Latin authors, but to understand the content of both Latin and Greek literature. Though himself a Latinist, he was the first to set a high value on Greek and the first to teach it in Germany and, therefore, may rightly be looked upon as the prophet of the Greek revival to be later instituted by Winckelmann, Lessing and Goethe. The revived classical tradition was carried forward by Ernesti, who, as professor of ancient literature at Leipsic from 1742, was the only official exponent of Greek in any German university in Winckelmann's day; by Reiske, who combined a critical knowledge of Greek with an unrivalled acquaintance with Arabic; and by Heyne, who lectured as Gesner's successor at Göttingen for half a century until his death in 1812. Heyne possessed neither

the enthusiasm nor the penetration of Winckelmann, nor the philosophical nor critical power of Lessing, but he surpassed them both in accuracy and method. Johann Friedrich Christ, the professor of history and poetry at Leipsic after 1754, urged his students not to confine their attention merely to the ancient languages, but to include ancient art, and consequently he may be regarded as the immediate forerunner of Winckelmann in archeology, as Gesner was of Wolf in philology. It is significant of the condition of classical study in Germany in Winckelmann's day that its leading exponents—with the exception of Reiske—were such men as the uncritical Latinists Gesner, Ernesti and Heyne. Many greater German philologists, like Ruhnken and Wyttenbach, had sought the more congenial atmosphere of the Netherlands for their life-work, while others, like Reiske, had been compelled to go there for instruction. Joseph Scaliger, on leaving France at the end of the sixteenth century, had called Holland "the only corner of Europe"; classical scholarship there, which had extended from Erasmus to Grotius, was again flourishing in Winckelmann's time under the influence of the great Hellenist Hemsterhuis, who had founded the only real school of Greek learning which had existed in Europe since the days of Scaliger and Casaubon.

In the last half of the eighteenth century these prejudices in favor of Latin studies over Greek were destined to be overthrown largely by the work of one man—Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Through his influence the older custom of looking upon the relics of antiquity on Italian soil as those exclusively of Roman civilization had to yield to the true origin of these things in Greece. In his first book, *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*,<sup>2</sup> which appeared in 1755 just as

<sup>2</sup> The German title of this work is: *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst*. 2d ed., 1756.

he was leaving Dresden for Rome, Winckelmann for the first time clearly disclosed the distinction between a Greek original of sculpture and painting and a Roman copy. In the next thirteen years down to his death his researches were destined to revolutionize the esthetic taste of Europe. His notion that there was an independent Greek art, from which Roman art was derived, was, strange as it may seem to us, a revelation to his contemporaries, who had uncritically accepted the interpretations of art works which had been based on the early enthusiasm for Roman history and literature. He showed that the realistic Italian sculpture of the day, which was more interested in anatomical accuracy than in the expression of the beautiful, copied merely the decadent phase of Greek art and that all such dramatic effects were directly opposed to the simplicity and repose of even Roman imitations of Greek works. With the disclosure that Roman art was derivative there was involved a new conception of the general origin of everything else in Roman civilization; for if Roman sculpture, painting and architecture were Greek, it followed that Roman literature and culture in general largely depended upon Greek. The change in viewpoint was to be fundamental and permanent; an entirely new inspiration was to come to Europe—an inspiration only comparable with that of the Renaissance itself. The taste of the succeeding period became Hellenic rather than Roman. Everything Greek—art, literature, history—began to be studied. The resulting intensity and expansion of interest in things Greek we now call the Greek Revival, whose waning we are unfortunately fated to see in our own time. This revival, beginning even in the lifetime of Winckelmann, came to full fruition after his death in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and was destined to become the most prominent spiritual feature of later European history. Lessing, by the publication of his famous essay

*Laocoon* in 1766—a work chiefly inspired by Winckelmann's ideas and studies—helped the nascent movement by critically establishing the superiority of Homer and thereby lowering the prevailing literary taste inaugurated by the French critics. Goethe's transcendent genius raised it into the higher realm of poetry. But the foundation of it all is to be sought in Winckelmann. He can rightly be called not only the founder of a science—for the principles which he laid down for antiquarian investigation have been followed since with ever increasing results—but also the greatest connoisseur and teacher of the Beautiful. His influence was by no means confined to the world of scholarship. The manifestations of the revival were manifold and far-reaching. The new inspiration entered not only into the more spiritual structure of culture—into the fine arts—but also into politics and every-day life. Here I can only most briefly and generally indicate a few of the more prominent manifestations which resulted from the stimulus of his work.

I have already spoken of the immediate effect of Winckelmann's influence on Lessing and Goethe. It was no less marked on all the Augustan writers of Germany, who owed their greatness to Winckelmann's disclosure of the Greek spirit. The new humanism soon, however, passed the boundaries of Germany and influenced all European letters. Travel to Greek lands began and a long line of English, German, French, Italian, Dutch and Scandinavian scholars studied the monuments on their native soil and wrote glowing accounts of their experiences, which immeasurably enlarged the horizon of scholarship. The new impulse was phenomenal in its influence on architecture, sculpture and painting. The simplicity of form of Greek porticoes and temples caused them everywhere to be copied; the theatrical and sentimental in sculpture yielded to Greek canons of restraint and dignity; Greek simplicity was taken

over into painting. In architecture Schinkel von Klenze and Semper appeared in Germany; Vignon, Hittorff and Chalgrin in France; Soane, Inwood and Wilkins in England, and the architects of many famous Greek buildings in the older cities of the United States. In sculpture the Italian Canova and the Danish Thorwaldsen were followed by the German Dannecker and the English Gibson; in painting the French David, the contemporary of the Revolution and Napoleon, was the best exponent of the new style. Though in all forms of art the imitation of Greek subjects and forms proved ephemeral, the standards of taste taken from Greek art will always remain authoritative. Only after the first quarter of the nineteenth century did the imitation of Greek forms in all the branches of art yield to more independent styles, like the great Gothic revival in architecture, which reached its zenith about 1850, when practically every church built in Europe and America was Gothic. In music the subjects of the operas of Gluck reflected the new spirit. Even in dress and furniture the same spirit was revealed: the short-waisted dress of the Revolutionary period, known as the Directoire in Europe and that of Martha Washington in our country, was merely an effort to recover Greek simplicity: furniture, even clocks, imitated Greek designs. In politics it is hard to overestimate the effect of the revival. The Revolutions in both America and France were certainly largely influenced by the account of republican institutions in *Plutarch's Lives*, the most popular book of the day, while the Greek War of Independence in the last century was due in great part to the sympathy of European scholars and statesmen and men like Byron, who were directly influenced by the sentiments awakened by the second Renaissance of Greek studies.

To have furnished the inspiration and the stimulus for such a change in the spiritual history of the world is indeed

an achievement of the highest order. As Walter Pater<sup>8</sup> has said, the highest that can be said of any critical effort is that "it has given a new sense, that it has laid open a new organ"; and this honor he pays to Winckelmann. Hegel, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art*, has also paid a tribute to the humble German scholar in these words: "Winckelmann, by his contemplation of the ideal works of the ancients received a sort of inspiration, through which he opened a new sense for the study of art. He is to be regarded as one of those who, in the sphere of art, have known how to initiate a new organ for the human spirit." Winckelmann was a man to whom art was both religion and fatherland; when he wrote he thought not of Germany alone nor of his own time, but of all Europe and posterity. When one reflects on what he accomplished and the honor which he brought to his native land, one should not be surprised that his memory has been so highly esteemed in the past by his countrymen as to have amounted almost to Winckelmannolatry, a sort of cult in which he was regarded as a spiritual superman, the patron saint of archeology and art criticism. A more reasonable appreciation of his merits is the custom now long obtaining in Rome and in many of the universities of Germany of repeatedly commemorating his natal day—December ninth—by the publication of contributions to the science which he founded.

It is interesting to know something of the personality and life story of the man who wrought so great a change in men's outlook. Voltaire would hear nothing of the biographies of great writers, for he maintained that the life of a quiet scholar lay open in his works. This is largely true of the authors of scientific works, where facts and methods are the paramount interest and the personality of the writers is secondary. But it is certainly not true

<sup>8</sup> See his essay on "Winckelmann," in his *Studies in the Art and Poetry of the Renaissance*, 1873. I have followed his translation of the passage from Hegel.

of poets, essayists nor of literary men in general, whose life work is more concerned with sentiment and emotion. It is for this reason that we are vastly more interested in the romantic lives of a Cellini or a Shelley than in the more prosaic ones of a Laplace or a Darwin. In the case of Winckelmann, the idea which was the soul of his life's activities was the very human one of beauty and it was through this alone that his personality has influenced successive generations of art lovers. In trying to express this idea he had to pass his early manhood in the uncongenial atmosphere of the north, condemned to subsist by teaching rudiments to children; but he spent his nights in reading Homer and Sophocles, which fired his enthusiasm and finally drew him to the south. The fulfilment of his life's work was of such importance that Lessing, on hearing of his untimely death, could say that Winckelmann was the second writer to whom he gladly would have given some years of his own life—meaning thereby that his life had been shortened by that catastrophe.

Winckelmann was of very lowly origin, the only son of a poor cobbler of Stendal, a town in the ancient Prussian province of Brandenburg. The house in which he was born consisted of only one thatch-roofed room, which was used by the family as working, living and sleeping quarters. His father naturally wished his son to follow his trade and only with the greatest difficulty was persuaded to let the boy go to the town Latin school. Here he received his first instruction from the almost blind rector whose *famulus* he became, reading to him, walking with him and looking after his library. His childish imagination was impressed by the medieval appearance of his native town, by its ancient gabled houses, lofty cathedral and massive city walls and gates, all of which aroused in him thus early a love of the historical and monumental. His boyhood was passed amid great poverty and trials which ever after left their

mark on his melancholy disposition. Years later while viewing the Roman Forum in full emancipation of spirit he said: "One gets spoiled here; but God owed me this, for I suffered too much in my youth." But he who was destined to interpret the charm and beauty of the spirit of Greece to his age, had first to serve an unhappy apprenticeship in the rude intellectual life of Germany. There is no wonder that, as Pater says, after "passing out of that into the happy light of the antique, he had a sense of exhilaration almost physical."

The old rector, seeing the boy's studious nature, wanted him to enter the Church. Consequently it was necessary for him to go beyond the Latin school to prepare himself for the university. At sixteen we find him at the Cologne Gymnasium in Berlin. This was at that time under the direction of a Greek scholar of note, Christian Tobias Damm, the lexicographer of Homer and Pindar. Winckelmann lived in his home as tutor to his children. He soon found, however, that he could get little instruction at the Gymnasium outside of Latin. The recent reform in German schools which had started in Halle under Francke paid little attention to Greek; everything was Latin, German and the positive sciences. Consequently it is no wonder that Winckelmann was more interested in the lectures given at the Academy of Arts and Sciences than in the work of the school. This naturally aroused the hostility of the rector, who showed his resentment by writing in the student register after Winckelmann's name the opinion that he was a *homo vagus et inconstans*, quite unaware on whose side the irony would eventually fall. However, it was not difficult for him to imbue the mind of his young pupil with the idea that Greek was superior to Latin and that Greek models must be imitated to raise the level of German culture. The imitation of Greek models in Art

was destined to be the theme of the first work published by his most famous student.

After three years Winckelmann left Berlin to enter the gymnasium of the Gray Cloister at Salzwedel, from which he entered the University of Halle with the intention of studying theology. The university at this time had about fifteen hundred students and a library of ten thousand volumes and was important in philosophy, theology and law. The Wolfian philosophy was then dominant there as at all German universities. Winckelmann studied philosophy and esthetics under the great Baumgarten, and he also studied Hebrew, mathematics, physics and law. Halle had no professor of Greek, but Schulze, a teacher of medicine and linguistics, admitted Winckelmann to his course on ancient coins. He got but little out of his theological studies except Hebrew; from his legal studies he received valuable lessons on the universality of history, a sense for outlining great epochs and an idea of clearness in exposition, lessons which stood him in good stead in later years. Where Goethe confessed the influence of Kant on his life, Winckelmann's study of philosophy led him to protest against all philosophers except Plato—and Plato was excepted merely because of his redeeming literary style. He never received a degree at Halle nor wrote a dissertation, but contented himself with receiving in February 1740 a certificate of membership in the theological class. For a half year longer he stayed at Halle in charge of the library of the university chancellor, where he spent most of his time reading Greek. He had arrived at the certainty that he was in no wise fitted for a theological career. In after years he spoke disparagingly of his university education, maintaining that he was his own teacher. We would expect such an opinion from a poet, who receives little assistance from a formal education, but from a scholar, such as the historian of ancient art and the votary

of the greatest intellectual tradition, we are surprised at such an admission.

After spending a short time as tutor in a family at Osterburg, Winckelmann in 1741 entered Jena to study medicine. Here he soon found that he had as little aptitude for medicine as he had for theology; his private work of tutoring left him little leisure either for his new studies or for his beloved Greek. The next spring he left Jena and became tutor to the sons of a high Prussian official named Lamprecht living near Magdeburg. Here he met von Hansen, a former secretary of the Danish ambassador to Paris, whose library, rich in modern literatures, was hospitably thrown open to him. From these books the young tutor became acquainted with the French sceptical movement, especially with the *Historical and Critical Dictionary* of Pierre Bayle. After a year and a half Winckelmann received a call as con-rector and teacher of Hebrew, logic and geometry at the gymnasium at Seehausen.

The five years which Winckelmann spent at Seehausen were the dreariest of his life. He always looked upon them in after years as a martyrdom. In one of his later letters we read: "I have enacted the schoolmaster with great fidelity and taught children with scabby heads their a b c's, while during this pastime I was ardently longing to attain to a knowledge of the beautiful and was repeating similes from Homer. . . . At that time I was constantly saying to myself what I still say at the present time:

τέτλαθι δῆ, κραδίη, καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης."<sup>4</sup>

No one in Seehausen could doubt his ability or skill as teacher; but a man whose head was full of such lofty ideas must necessarily have presided over his classes in an indifferent manner. His predecessor Boysen had been a veritable Orbilius and Winckelmann found his pupils de-

<sup>4</sup> From the *Odyssey*, Bk. 20, l. 18: "Endure, my heart; yea, a baser thing thou once didst bear" (Butcher and Lang).

ficient in taste and far more interested in facts than in sentiment. Boysen, who had become a preacher in Magdeburg, wrote that he could say without self-praise that he "had done incomparably more for literature and the sciences in the year and a half that he had acted as assistant rector than was done in five years by his successor." After his day's work in the schoolroom, Winckelmann had to spend the early evening tutoring Lamprecht's son whom he had brought along with him, and he was only free to do his own reading after ten o'clock. He spent the greater part of the night reading Homer, Sophocles, Herodotus, Xenophon and Plato. He ordinarily retired at midnight but arose at four the next morning to read until six, when his school duties began again. It is said that for a whole year he never undressed to go to bed, but slept in his chair. He literally followed the poet's advice:

"vos exemplaria graeca  
nocturna versate manu, versate diurna."

Apart from his Greek authors he also read largely in modern literatures. He even found pleasure in Voltaire's artificial classicism; the subtle Frenchman, whose superficial taste Winckelmann was one day to supplant by the clear ring of the genuine ancient spirit, at least gave him a love for French letters, which contrasted with his contempt for German books. We must remember that Goethe was not yet and that there was nothing in German literature which could have anticipated his *Iphigenie*.

In teaching Greek Winckelmann had little in the way of texts. There were in Germany at this time only a few Italian and Dutch texts of the classics and about the only Greek books for class-room use were the selections of Borst and Gesner. Not satisfied with such ἀποσπάσματα Winckelmann made handwritten copies of commentators and scholiasts. Some of these manuscripts, beautifully written, are still in existence. He planned with a fellow teacher to

publish a collection of classical authors and actually annotated parts of Sophocles as well as Juvenal and Persius, which were never published. He was mercifully saved for something higher than the editing of text-books.

In addition to his poverty—he received only two hundred and fifty thalers a year—overwork and school duties which he hated, Winckelmann also got into trouble at Seehausen with the rector. As assistant rector he was unable to hold chapel himself and so was obliged to listen to the preaching of his superior. Instead of listening to the service Winckelmann would read his Homer in church and was also untactful in expressing his contempt of his colleague's abilities. His remarks naturally reached the ears of the rector, who in retaliation denounced Winckelmann's knowledge of Latin. However there is a letter in existence whose Latinity at least is above reproach, in which years after Winckelmann expressed his contempt of his superior in language which would have done justice to Martial. Among other things he wrote: "I still remember the looks with which I was insulted by a man lighter than the shadow of a cork-tree, and, of all bipeds, the most worthy to be the wiper of Silenus, the most stupid of the gods."<sup>5</sup> In the year 1747 his unhappiness reached a climax: as the poet says,

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies  
But in battalions."

His school work oppressed him; he had little time for his own studies; his pupils were stupid; the attitude of the rector had become unbearable; he became lonely and melancholy, and his tiny income scarcely met his simple wants; on top of all his mother, to whom he was passionately attached, died. He longed for a change, but did not know

<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Kleinow: "...Haerent infixi pectore vultus, quibus nobis insultavit homo umbra suberis levior, et omnium bipedum dignissimus, qui Sileno, stupidissimo Deorum, a clunibus sit." (Translation of G. Henry Lodge, *Winckelmann's History of Ancient Art*, I, p. 12.)

where to turn. He knew he was unfitted for the Church, for law or medicine; school teaching had become utterly loathsome to him. Only the literature of art pleased him, and he longed to leave Germany and visit the countries of the classical tradition. As he wrote at this time: "It is my misfortune that I was not born to great place, where I might have enjoyed cultivation and the opportunity of following my instinct and forming myself." But he was thirty years old and had not received as yet a single favor of fortune. In 1748 he wrote Count Büнау of Nötheniz near Dresden—the first German historian and the author of a History of the Holy Roman Empire—"for a corner in his library." In his letter he hinted at his unhappy position "in a metaphysical age by which humane literature is trampled under foot," and continued: "Nowadays little value is set on Greek literature, to which I have devoted myself so far as I could when good books are scarce and expensive." Soon afterward we find him ensconced in Büнау's library of over forty thousand volumes, lodged and paid from fifty to eighty thalers a year. He had finally found congenial work.

During the six years which he spent at Nötheniz he made frequent visits to the collection of antiquities at Dresden nearby. Hitherto he had only known the words of Greek poetry; now for the first time he was in the presence of the visible remains of Greek culture. In Dresden he got acquainted with many artists, especially with Oeser, Goethe's friend and teacher, whose culture and knowledge of art were of great assistance to Winckelmann. Through Oeser's influence he finally moved to Dresden where he spent the year 1754-5—the most important and decisive in his life. Here in the Saxon capital he felt at home: for though born in Prussia, Winckelmann was no Prussian: his gentle nature rebelled against the Spartan military discipline and the police system of that despotic land, and

he was fond of boasting that his fatherland was Saxony and that no drop of Prussian blood flowed in his veins.

Dresden at this time was the most cultivated city of Germany. During the reign of the splendor-loving August the Strong (1694-1733) and that of his successor, the art virtuoso August III, the city had become greatly embellished and had reached a prominent place as a cradle of art. August the Strong had made the grand tour and had become captivated by the spirit of the reign of Louis XIV. On his return he had his architect Pöppelmann begin the erection of the Zwinger, the original plan being to make this building the center of a grand architectural display. It recalls the palatial French edifices which had been built as monuments to glorify the reign of the Grand Monarch. The age of Louis had been fond of comparing itself with the Golden Age of Rome; so the Zwinger was intended to embrace the most sumptuous features of Roman palaces, baths and pleasure buildings. The purpose of Rococo art, which we see in part worked out in this building, was to invest even the domestic life of princes with pomp and state, to show to the people the royal cabinet and private office. The Dresden opera and theater were also French; sculpture, however, was here as elsewhere in Europe dominated by the Italian taste of Bernini. The collection of paintings had been founded in 1722, while that of sculpture, mostly formed from the Chigi and Albani collections of Rome, had started with the Brandenburg collection in 1723. These were the only art collections of any importance in Germany. The Sistine Madonna had been brought to Dresden in 1753 just before Winckelmann left for Italy. The art treasures of the city were so rich that the sculptor Cavaceppi, the fellow traveler of Winckelmann on his last journey, could flatteringly say that Dresden might strive for first place with the Capitoline collection at Rome. A colony of foreign artists lived here, as also several native

ones of note. In short, as Winckelmann said, "Dresden is becoming ever more the Athens of artists"—a sentiment echoed some years later by Herder, who called Dresden the German Florence. The seven years which Winckelmann spent in and near Dresden were indeed happy years. These were the years from the end of the War of the Austrian Succession to the outbreak of the Seven Years War in 1756 and were the most peaceful which Europe had seen for a long period. During these years, as Voltaire says in his *Le siècle de Louis XIV*: "Industry bloomed from Petersburg to Cadiz; the fine arts were everywhere in honor; all nations had intercourse with one another; Europe was like a big family which had become united after its troubled days." Nowhere were the fruits of peace better to be enjoyed than in Dresden, which at this time had the most illustrious court in Europe.

Winckelmann was already past his thirty-seventh year and the world as yet had seen no public proof of his ability and learning. He had begun to ask himself with Juvenal:

"Semper ego auditor tantum?"

In 1755, the year that he left Dresden forever, he published the first of the three great works by which he is remembered, his *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*. This was followed immediately by a pretended attack and then by a defence of its principles. Winckelmann had studied the simplicity and repose of Raphael's great Madonna and found that the same elements were also characteristic of Greek art. In this first book was the kernel of his fundamental view of art, words which were soon to be memorable in later essays and in his great History of Art: "One must imitate the Greeks and not nature only; for the Greeks knew the secret." This secret was that art should be characterized by "noble simplicity" and "calm grandeur." As sculpture was the chief

product of Greek art, he discussed it most and showed why it was superior to modern sculpture, which was dominated by Bernini's theatrical taste and characterized by strange and uncouth poses and treatment. The book, though full of obscurities, reached its purpose—the direct appeal from the artificial classicism of the day to the study of the ancients. It was enthusiastically received; every one was amazed at the author's boldness in assailing the prevailing taste. Lessing got from it the inspiration for his *Laocoon*, the book which Macaulay said "filled him with wonder and despair," in which the author analyzed the boundaries of poetry and the plastic arts, and enunciated the principle that each art was subject to very definite conditions and could only attain its end by limiting itself to its own function. Winckelmann in a few months was recognized as belonging to the first rank of German writers. It was the turning point in his life. Not only do misfortunes come in battalions, but also, even if more seldom, fortune's favor. By this book he achieved not only celebrity, but, best of all, the opportunity to go to Italy. His Dresden sojourn had filled him with an overwhelming desire to see Rome. For here in Dresden it had become clear to him that art was the main interest of his life and that Italy was the only place in which properly to continue its study. His success was all the sweeter because it was unexpected and in such contrast with his earlier years of struggle. From now on we have a different Winckelmann. His *Lehrjahre* are now over: art has become his religion and now that he has attained his freedom and maturity he appears to us, as Goethe said, "consummate, entire, complete in the ancient sense."

As the Saxon court was Catholic the only road to favor at Dresden was through the Roman ecclesiastics. Back in 1751 Archinto, the Papal Nuncio at Dresden, had visited Nötheniz and had suggested to Winckelmann,

who had acted as his guide through the library, that Rome best suited his health and temperament. He had then held out to him the hope of a place in the Papal library and had told him how Cardinal Passionei, an ardent student of Greek, had been pleased with his beautiful Greek handwriting and would be ready to play the Maecenas if only he would accede to the indispensable condition of joining the Roman Church. The bribe was finally accepted and Winckelmann, after a great deal of hesitation, became a Catholic in 1754. Goethe explains this conversion by pleading that Winckelmann was a pagan spirit to whom Christianity was nothing. That Winckelmann had no intention of deception by the disguise is shown by the fact that he had a book by Voltaire in his pocket when searched at the Roman custom house, and that later during his residence in Rome he lived in constant fear of an inquisition. He gives his own version of the affair in a letter to a friend: "It is a love of knowledge, and that alone which can induce me to listen to the proposal made me." In 1760 he had an opportunity of holding a fat office in Vienna if he would only take the tonsure. At that time he answered: "I was born free and I will die free." Doubtless the fact that the Roman Church was in so many ways bound up with pagan grandeur had made this superficial change of heart easy. In any case his religious sentiments were all merged in those of art. As for his embracing Roman Catholicism he would have turned Mohammedan with equal ease if he could have gained thereby a good chance to study antique marbles. On reaching Rome he was mercifully excused from kissing the pontiff's foot, and Benedict XIV assured him of his continued favor. Dresden had proven to be the gateway to Italy. The Elector of Saxony, pleased with his book, promised him a pension of two hundred and fifty thalers, and in September 1755 he started for Italy.

For the next thirteen years of his life Winckelmann devoted himself entirely to the study of art and archeology. It was fortunate that he, like Goethe, had come to Italy in full maturity of mind. The effect of Rome on the poor German scholar was immense. Everything about the Eternal City pleased him—its free artist life, its antiquities, libraries, language, climate and above all the spell of the past. Here there was no bureaucracy, no military, no police. Everything in the congenial atmosphere of the city with its Hellenic affinities made a truly artistic ensemble for him. From a long familiarity with ancient literature his mind had acquired an antique cast; when he reached the Niobe of nations and viewed its ruins and art treasures, he felt as if he belonged not to the present but to the past. He said in the fulness of his rapture: "All is nothing compared with Rome! Formerly I thought I had thoroughly studied everything and behold, when I arrived here, I found I knew nothing." In a letter three years later to a friend in Dresden he says: "In Rome, I believe, is the university for all the world, and I have been purified and tried in it." He also felt that he was in a sense out of place, for he wrote: "I am one of those whom the Greeks called ὠψιμαθής—I have come into the world and into Italy too late." He was pleased with the cordial reception which he received from the Cardinals Passionei and Albani; their democratic ways contrasted strangely with the *hauteur* of Germans of high position, for he was immediately invited to drive and walk with them on terms of the greatest intimacy. His life was one of the utmost simplicity; at first he lived in the artists' quarter; he never went to the theater nor the opera, but went early to bed where he slept undisturbed by the street noises which at this time were worse than in the days of Juvenal. His delicate constitution only allowed him the simplest fare—generally only bread and wine, though he

drank the latter neat like a German. After remaining four years in Rome Winckelmann lodged in the palace of Cardinal Albani, living on his pension from the Saxon prince and another of about \$120 from the cardinal. Four years later, in 1763, he was appointed to the high-sounding office of *Commissario della Antichità della camera apostolica*, with oversight over all the antiquities in and near Rome, at a salary of about \$180, his pension from Dresden by then having been stopped. In the same year he was also given a clerkship in Hebrew in the Papal library at a salary of \$50, a position which entailed practically no work, but confined him from eight to twelve hours a day. Thus his total income in Rome was never over \$350, though this amount was enough in those days for a quiet scholar.

At this time Rome was the center of classical studies. The collections of the Louvre, the Glyptothek and the British Museum were not yet in existence. There was little of importance in Berlin or in any German city outside of Dresden. The sculptures of the Uffizi in Florence, mostly from the Roman Villa Medici, were not set up until the end of the century when also the Farnese collection was taken to Naples. In the latter city the finds from the buried towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum had not yet been made public. So Rome was the only place in which to properly study ancient art. It was the day before travels, excavations, reviews and books on art. The only cast collection in existence was the small one gathered in Rome by Raphael Mengs. It is doubtful if Lessing ever saw a copy of the Laocoon when he wrote his famous essay. Bonn University was the first to have a collection of casts, which was made in the early part of the nineteenth century; now not only all the German universities, but many of those in the United States have them. Even in Rome there were no public museums. Only three of the five great Roman collections of the present day existed in Winckelmann's time—those

of the Villas Albani, Borghese and Ludovisi, and these were all under private ownership. The Medici collection was moved to Florence a little later; the present Capitoline collection was originally in the Villa Albani and after its sale the present Villa Albani collection was begun; the present Vatican museum of antiquities, now the finest in the world, had as its beginning in Winckelmann's day the statues of the Belvedere collection, which had been begun in the sixteenth century by Pope Julius II and was named from the garden house in the Vatican grounds where they were exposed down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Only a few, however, of the present masterpieces, like the Hercules Torso, the Apollo and the Laocoon, date their appearance in the Vatican from that period. The Museo Pio-Clementino was started at the end of the eighteenth century, while the Chiaramonti and the Braccio Nuovo had their beginnings in the nineteenth.

It was in the year 1758 that Winckelmann made his first visit to Naples to visit the sculptures there and to view the recently opened excavations in the neighborhood. At Resina, on the site of Herculaneum, the theater had already been laid bare and at Pompeii a portion of the amphitheater and the eastern end of the town had been excavated. He stayed in and around Naples for two months, enjoying everything he saw and did, even the eating of enormous cauliflowers and the drinking of *Lacrima Christi*. He also went on to the site of Paestum, which at that time was merely a malaria-stricken wilderness containing a few shepherds' huts. Here he saw the first Greek temples. Their existence until a short time before had been a secret even to artists and antiquaries. Macaulay, in describing Addison's visit to these ruins at the end of the seventeenth century, graphically writes: "Though situated within a few hours journey of a great capital where Salvator had not long before painted and where Vico was then lecturing,

these noble ruins were as little known to Europe as the ruined cities overgrown by the forests of Yucatan." Winckelmann made in all three more visits to Naples in the years 1762, 1764 and 1767. It was in 1760 that the statue of Diana had been discovered inside a little temple at Pompeii, the first example of an ancient sculpture which retained traces of color. As the fruit of his second and third visits Winckelmann gave to the world in two letters the first authentic information about the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum.<sup>6</sup> During his last visit, he, like the elder Pliny, was able to witness a great eruption of Vesuvius. Accompanied by von Riedesel, he went to Portici, whence the party walked out over the ancient lava beds to the new and was compelled, in order to reach the crater's mouth, to pass over hot lava which scorched the soles of their shoes. He had also planned during his first journey south to make a tour of Calabria and Sicily. A journey to Southern Italy, however, was no easy task. The conditions of travel were barbarous; the roads were nearly impassable and were beset by thieves and cutthroats. In the Kingdom of Naples one could only go on foot or on horseback and had to be accompanied from place to place by a soldier. If one had no servants and no letters of introduction to landed proprietors along the way, he had to put up with the food of an anchorite and to sleep on pallets no strangers to vermin. In a letter Winckelmann recounts how his journey to Paestum in 1758 was filled with a hundred annoyances. Of the danger of brigands he says: "One must go with two pistols in his sack, two in his girdle, and with a good claymore at his side and a gun on his shoulder." Despite the ridiculous figure the poor scholar must have cut in such a panoply, he says he bought all these necessities in Naples. The ignorance

<sup>6</sup> *Sendschreiben von den herculanischen Entdeckungen* (1762) and *Nachricht von den neuesten herculanischen Entdeckungen* (1764).

which prevailed among educated men of that day about Calabria is shown by Winckelmann's belief that there were ruined temples there. He only gave up his intention of visiting them when he learned from the English noble Brudnell, who had just returned from a journey along the coast as far as Taranto, that, outside the temple of Juno at Croton, there were no ruins to be seen. In his last journey to Naples he also again seriously had in mind a trip to Sicily to visit the Doric architectural ruins there. His enthusiasm had been fired by the descriptive letters written by Riedesel, who was the first scholar to make the island known to lovers of art. Goethe, years later when in Girgenti (1787), spoke of Riedesel's little volume, which he says he carried about with him "in his bosom like a breviary or talisman." At the beginning of 1760 Winckelmann also seriously considered a trip to Greece with Lady Oxford. He then wrote: "Nothing in the world have I so ardently desired as this; willingly would I allow one of my fingers to be cut off, indeed I would make myself a priest of Cybele, could I see that land." Again in 1768, the year of his death, he was invited to accompany von Riedesel to Greece. But he was destined never to see either Sicily or Greece. New vistas of travels and plans for work were constantly being opened up to his mind; the infinity of possibilities made him sadly reflect—

"Ach, das Leben ist am Ziele  
Und die Kunst noch kaum begonnen."<sup>7</sup>

During his first visit to Naples in 1758 Winckelmann had been recalled to Rome by the last illness of the Pope and immediately after his death went to Florence, which he described as "the most beautiful place I have ever seen and far superior to Naples," and as "the true cradle of the Italian art spirit." While here he studied the art treasures of the city and worked assiduously on a catalogue of the

<sup>7</sup> "Alas that life has reached its goal  
And art is scarce begun."

great collection of gems owned by the Prussian Baron von Stosch, who resided there. He says that he never before had worked so hard; for six months he only allowed himself a half-hour's relaxation in the evening. He had to complete the catalogue in Rome the following year, where he could avail himself of the study of the gems in the Museo Kircheriano and of the advice of connoisseurs in that field. The work finally appeared in 1760 under the title *Descriptions des pierres gravées du feu Baron de Stosch*—his first scientific work. It was while he was in Florence that his old friend Archinto, the secretary of Cardinal Albani, died, and he was summoned to Rome to become the librarian and companion of the aged prelate. It was after this that he wrote many essays on various phases of the subject of art and antiquities; he also carefully studied the descriptions of monuments in Pausanias and the conception of the *Beautiful* in Plato. Many of these minor writings—like those on the *Apollo Belvedere* and on *Grace in Works of Art* and the study of *The Capability of the Beautiful in Sculpture*—are among the most beautiful from his pen. But the results of all his studies and writings finally culminated in his greatest work *Die Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*. It will be convenient at this point in recounting the chief events in Winckelmann's career to briefly bring together what relates to the origin and fate of this work and also of his last book the *Monumenti antichi inediti*.

Winckelmann had had the plan of writing the *History of Ancient Art* in mind ever since his second year in Rome. He continually visited the treasures of the Belvedere to arouse his spirit, and from these visits grew his desire to write such a book. He looked upon all his preceding reading and essays as merely preparatory to this work, which for years robbed him of most of his time. He was long in doubt in what language such a history should be written. Cardinal Albani suggested Italian on the theory

that *dum vivis Romae, Romano vivito more*. But Winckelmann finally decided on his mother tongue. The first draft of the work had been sent to Dresden for publication in 1758, but, in consequence of delay, it had been withdrawn the following year. This proved to be a fortunate circumstance, for it allowed the author to recast it and to produce an almost entirely new work. This revision extended over the years 1758-61, and in 1762 he again looked about for a printer. The work finally appeared in Dresden in two volumes quarto in the year 1764 and was dedicated to Friedrich Christian, the Elector of Saxony, who had succeeded August III, Winckelmann's patron, the year before. The size of the edition made it impossible to bring out a new edition for some time, so that the author had to content himself with collecting emendations and additions for a second work entitled *Anmerkungen über die Geschichte der Kunst*, which appeared in 1767. Just before his death he had begun to recast the material for a second edition which was to appear in French; but fate was against him. On his last journey he carried the manuscript for this edition with him, and the very last words that he penned while in Trieste, where he was murdered, were in reference to it. After his death the manuscript was sent to Vienna, where it was published with great negligence. From this publication came the Italian edition and another French translation.

Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art* is the earliest work in which the origin and development of sculpture and painting in Egypt, Phœnicia, Persia, Etruria, Greece and Rome is systematically presented in connection with the general progress of culture. Following the custom of French writers on art, he wrote an art history in general, but one of Greece in particular. He recognized that art was but one phase of the history of mankind, though it was the flower of national life and evolution. Not con-

tent with merely presenting the beautiful monuments of art, he investigated the sources of beauty in Greece and the reason why Greek art still commands the world's admiration. In unfolding the theory of the *Beautiful* he finds that "the highest purpose and the central point of art" is beauty rather than instruction. This thought was to dominate artists, critics and poets for the next two generations. Ideal beauty can only be attained when individual features are subordinated to the general scheme in the mind of the artist. The artist selects his theme from the natural world and combines it with his imagination, thereby creating an ideal type marked by the two characteristics of "noble simplicity" and "calm greatness" or "repose." All details, like muscles and veins, must not be allowed to impair the harmony and the proportions. He discerned for the first time what is now a commonplace of knowledge that "beauty has been esteemed by no people so highly as by the Greeks." The beauty of the youth of life was so extolled by the Greeks that Aristobulus in Xenophon's *Symposium* is made to say: "I swear by all the gods that I would not choose the power of the Persian king in preference to beauty." This Greek ideal of beauty is nowhere so preeminent as in sculpture, where it is especially associated with youth, for in youth more than in manhood the artist finds the causes of beauty," in unity, variety and harmony"; "the forms of beautiful youth resemble the unity of the surface of the sea, which at a distance appears smooth and still like a mirror, although it is constantly in movement with its heaving swell."

In writing his History Winckelmann used everything—monuments and books both ancient and modern. His own artistic sense, helped on by vast erudition and by a vigorous imagination, enabled him to make remarkably true suggestions about periods of Greek art where little real information then existed. He overthrew many of the

older interpretations of monuments, which had been based on the false theory of the Roman origin of ancient art. Thus he found that the portrait busts in Italian collections were far too realistic to be Greek, too much out of harmony with Greek ideality. He was the first to divide Greek art into epochs, indicating the sequence of styles corresponding to changes in society and politics. These divisions are still kept in our histories of art; the archaic style (*älterer Stil*); the grand style (*hoher Stil*) of the age of Phidias, characterized by grandeur, beauty and truth to nature; the beautiful style (*schöner Stil*), beginning with Praxiteles and characterized by elegance and grace; and lastly the style of the imitators, when the old ideals of simplicity were lost and a pretentious and decadent taste came in. At the end of the work he devotes a few pages to Roman art, a period in which all originality had been lost and art was devoted to the repetition of earlier types.

There was really no one in 1764 who was able to criticise adequately this work. The few who knew Greek literature knew nothing of the monuments and those in Rome who were acquainted with the latter knew little of Greek letters or history. The work was nothing short of a revelation to his contemporaries and it profoundly influenced the best minds everywhere. It was praised by learned societies and scholars for its flowing style, its erudition, its sane judgments, its insight and its sense of beauty and proportion. It was soon recognized as a permanent contribution to European science and *belles lettres*. Lessing received a copy while still at work on his *Laocoon*, and was unbounded in his praise; the contemporary French sculptor Falconet said he had "read nothing better on the beautiful in art"; Diderot was more guarded, for while praising the author's enthusiasm, he felt the application of his ideas to sculpture was wrong, since he did not agree with Winckelmann's fundamental notion of art, that it

should imitate the antique rather than nature. The Italian architect Visconti and the Frenchman Quatremère de Quincy years later found nothing but praise for it; Madame de Staël, in her *Allemagne*, said that it was Winckelmann who "brought about an entire revolution in the manner of considering the arts" and that he had "banished from the fine arts of Europe the mixture of ancient and modern taste" and that "no one before him had united such exact and profound observation with admiration so animated."<sup>8</sup> Winckelmann's Roman contemporaries, like Raphael Mengs, were unbounded in their approval. Heyne in Göttingen some years later wrote a eulogy of the author, though he, like Diderot, tempered his praise with real criticism. Heyne had written on Pliny's art epochs and was surprised that Winckelmann had made so little use of that author; but the author of the *History of Ancient Art* knew that Pliny was no evangelist in matters of art. Heyne called attention to the weakness of the work—its uncritical statements and inaccuracies, though he was wrong to conclude that the historical part was therefore "practically useless."

The *History of Ancient Art* was a masterpiece of German prose; though primarily a scientific work, it possessed all the grace, rhythm and dignity which we expect in a work of pure literature. With Lessing's Essay it may be said to be the beginning of modern German prose. These two writers brought German literature into line with the world literatures and by opening to the Germans the empire of beauty brought a plastic element into their poetry. Winckelmann confessed that he had followed the dictum of Roscommon that the "greatest masterpiece of everything in which mankind has been distinguished is good writing." The style, always original, is at times grand as when treating of the essence of beauty and in certain descriptions

<sup>8</sup> See her eulogy, *Allemagne*, Part II, Chap. VI (transl. by O. W. Wright).

it actually soars. Of his eloquence in describing the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoon, Madame de Staël found his style as "calm and majestic as the object of his consideration." But its style and poetic beauty are its least important features. It instituted the historic study of art and indicated the methods by which that subject must be approached; greatest of all, it overthrew the false taste of the day and for the first time scientifically showed the existence of an independent Greek art.

In criticising the contents of this work to-day we must bear in mind that it entered an almost new field of criticism and therefore was influenced but little by anything which had preceded it; furthermore we must remember that it was composed at a time when but few monuments of the great period of Greek art were known. In the preface Winckelmann mentions the now forgotten works of the painter Monier, of Durand and of Turnbull. The best preceding work on ancient painting, that of Franz Junius, which had appeared well over a century before (in 1637) and remained the source for the study of Greek art all that time, he does not mention. This work was, however, more philological and philosophical than historical in character and had been written by a man who had lived most of his life in England and who had never seen Italy. The Frenchman Goguet published in 1758 a work on the *Origin of the Laws of the Arts and Sciences*, "one of the best books of our times," as Winckelmann termed it; but this work was anthropological and historical in character rather than esthetic. The most exact and learned work on Greek sculpture was a part of the recent *Recueil d'antiquités* of the Comte de Caylus,<sup>9</sup> who had traveled extensively in Italy, Greece and the East. As for the monuments of Greek art then available to Winckelmann in Italy,

<sup>9</sup> *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines et galloises*, 6 vols. Paris, 1752-5.

it may be said that the most important examples now known to us had not yet been discovered. Of the archaic period there were but few significant works and almost none of the time of Phidias and little of the fourth century B. C. Still Winckelmann's treatment of the "grand" and "beautiful" styles of the fifth and fourth centuries are for all times and all peoples.

Many of his historical conclusions about art are, of course, mistaken. Thus his idea that the Greeks first worked in clay and then in wood, ivory, stone and bronze successively must be given up, as well as his idea that the Greek sculptor first used unwrought cornered blocks, which were subsequently rounded and then fashioned into herms by placing heads at one end and later differentiated by sex, followed by sculpturing the upper part of the body and then the lower, until at last Daedalian statues with the legs separated were evolved. He was quite as mistaken in his contention that Greek art was independent in origin, quite uninfluenced by the art of Egypt and the East, the Greeks "not deriving the first seeds from elsewhere," but "appearing to have been original discoverers." We must also remember that Winckelmann had to reach Greek art largely through Roman copies and imitations; consequently many of his conclusions are inadequate in their basis and have been either completely overthrown or largely modified by subsequent discoveries. Thus no one to-day would echo his excessive praise of such monuments of sculpture as the Laocoon, the Hercules Torso or the Apollo of the Belvedere. He assigns the Laocoon to Alexander's time, but concludes that posterity has been "unable to produce anything worthy of being compared with it even remotely." The torso he places in the age of Alexander's immediate successors and looks upon it as the "lofty ideal of a body elevated above nature"; the Apollo belongs to the imperial times after Nero's reign and is "the highest ideal of art

among all the works of antiquity which have escaped destruction," and the effect produced on him by its aspect is "indescribable." He even explains the lack of veins in both the Torso and the Apollo as a sign of their "heavenly essence." The excellencies which he saw in these and similar works we can now see in far less contaminated purity in many monuments which were unknown in his day, and consequently we judge them from a very different standard when we compare them with genuine products of Greek art of the great period instead of with those of the decadent epoch. If Winckelmann had seen such beautiful statues at those of the Hermes or the Melian Aphrodite, the pride of the Louvre and by many looked upon as the most beautiful of all sculptures, their "noble simplicity" and "calm greatness" would have called forth the encomium which, in the absence of such noble works, he gave to decadent pieces. In that case he doubtless would have seen in the Belvedere torso not a resting Hercules at all, but perhaps merely a Cyclops—as Sauer maintains—who is holding up his hand to shade his eyes as he looks out over the sea to get a glance of his beloved Galatea, and so this piece, with all its fine modelling, would fall into place among Pergamene works of the Hellenistic period; its lack of veins, then, could not be explained by an attempt to deify a hero or to etherealize his body. Lessing, instead of using the Laocoon as an example of what sculpture should not attempt—for it not only groans as he and Winckelmann said, but shrieks—uses it to illustrate the difference between the principles of poetry and sculpture. If either had seen the masterpieces of sculpture from the Elgin marbles down, they would have judged it very differently and seen that it, like the Laocoon, belongs to Pergamene art, as an extreme example of the tendencies of that art toward dramatic power and exaggerated pathos. In the case of the Apollo, however, we must admire Winckelmann's insight; for

many modern critics believe it is a copy of an original bronze dating, perhaps, from the fourth century B. C.; its original has even been assigned to Leochares, who worked with the great Scopas on the Mausoleum.

To one so imbued with the Greek essence of beauty, it is not strange that Winckelmann denounced the fantastic and exaggerated conceits and affectations of modern art and in opposition fearlessly preached his admiration of the purity, naturalness and simplicity of ancient works. But it was just this insistence on Greek ideals that at times led him into wrong appraisals of certain modern artists. Thus his wholesale condemnation of the greatest of the Renaissance sculptors seems to us not only harsh but wholly unjust, even if we try to excuse it by the fact that he doesn't judge him from the point of view of modern artists but from that of the ancients. In a classic simile he says Michelangelo compared with Raphael is what Thucydides is compared with Xenophon. To him the supreme interpreter of the Old Testament, the immortal artists of Sibyls and Prophets, by his striving after the difficult and extraordinary, and his "studious employment of scientific knowledge," is merely the originator and promoter of the corruption of taste, which culminated in the theatrical motives and strained attitudes of Bernini's art. While admitting that he "contemplated lofty beauty," he finds this feature in his poetry rather than in his sculpture and painting. His Christ heads are "mean and vulgar" and "borrowed from the barbarous works of the Middle Ages." The youthful beardless heads of Christ painted by Raphael and Annibale Caracci, as well as the bearded Christ of Leonardo, he found far more noble. Winckelmann's insistence on Greek ideals led him to affirm that subjects drawn from the Christian religion were not favorable to art, and consequently he endeavored to arouse in the artist enthusiasm for classical mythology. Thus he said that artists should

copy their Saviours from the models of Greek heroes and their Holy Virgins from Amazon heads, not perceiving that any such slavish tendency would mean the deathknell to all independence and progress. In violent contrast to his disapproval of Michelangelo, he lauds his friend Raphael Mengs as "the most accomplished instructor in his art," and speaks of the "immortal works" of him who had "reached the highest point of excellence to which the genius of men has ever risen." He ends his panegyric of Mengs by calling him "the German Raphael." We are reminded that a German admirer of the author of *Paradise Lost* called Klopstock "the German Milton," and that Coleridge sneeringly rejoined "a very German Milton, indeed!"

Winckelmann's second great work was written in Italian, the splendidly illustrated *Monumenti*. On his forty-fourth birthday in 1761 he announced this work which finally appeared six years later. This "classic work," as Visconti called it, was chiefly intended for Italian scholars and lovers of art and not, like the *History of Ancient Art*, for the general reader. It was more the fruit of Winckelmann's Italian sojourn than any of his other works, a fitting tribute of the author to his adopted land. Casanova furnished the drawings for the more than two hundred copper plates and vignettes, which were mainly taken from sarcophagi reliefs; the expense of draftsmen, engravers and printing were all borne by the author. The plates, selected from unpublished monuments, were accompanied by explanations of mythology, customs and history. Winckelmann spent much time and energy on this monumental work. He says in a letter: "It is known to God and myself how I have sweated over it. There are pieces in it over each one of which I have sat for five months." In recent years it has been objected that the work was overloaded with unnecessary learning after the Italian fashion, on the assumption that the author wished to make

a display of his erudition among his Italian contemporaries. In any case it is an invaluable work and shows the same original and independent style which we see in all his writings.

We now come to the last scene in Winckelmann's life—his untimely end. On leaving Germany for Italy thirteen years before, he had had no intention of remaining there permanently. But soon after he left Dresden the Seven Years War broke out and Saxony, especially the capital city, suffered terribly. He was fortunate to receive his pension at first; but after two years it was cut in two, and in 1763, on the death of his patron August II, it was withdrawn entirely. In the winter of 1767-8 on returning from his last visit to Naples, he was hard at work on the revision of his History, for he intended in the spring, in conformity with a plan which he had long had in mind, to revisit Germany and especially Berlin, where he was to see a French edition of his work through the press. The recent invitation extended to him by Frederick the Great, to come there and take charge of the royal collection of antiquities, was well known in Italy, and every attempt was made to dissuade him from going, as it was felt that he was the only man in Italy with a critical knowledge of Greek literature and art, and it was feared that he might never return if he again visited his native land. It was also just at this time that von Riedesel invited him to accompany him to Greece and the East, a journey which Winckelmann had longed for all his life. It was a far easier thing for him to get permission to go to Greece than to cross the Alps. It was hard for him not only to refuse Riedesel but to break the ties which bound him to his Roman friends, especially to the aged Cardinal Albani. Still the desire to see his old home finally decided him to go north. In his last letter to his old friend Franke at Nötheniz he fondly referred to the *Ruheort* where they were to

meet; but he was destined to see neither him nor any of his other early friends.

He started north on April 10, accompanied by his friend the sculptor Cavaceppi, who has left us a description of a part of the journey. They traveled via Bologna, Venice and Verona, and all went well until they reached the Tyrolean Alps. It was here on his journey to Rome years before that the grandeur of the mountain scenery had delighted him so much that later he regarded this part of the journey south as the most agreeable; at that time he had written to his friend Berends: "I should fill my whole letter with things about the Tyrol, if I should attempt to describe the rapture into which I was thrown." Now all was changed; thirteen years in Italy lay between. He now looked upon the same nature with aversion, calling it a "shocking, horrible landscape," and he even found fault with the architecture of the picturesque thatched Alpine chalets. He told Cavaceppi he could not find words to express his feelings of aversion. His companion at first thought he was jesting. In a few days they reached Munich and finally Ratisbon, where Winckelmann came unalterably to the determination not to continue the journey, but to return at once to Italy. Though he recognized that Cavaceppi's remonstrance was just and that he was leaving him in a country whose customs and language he did not understand, he answered that he felt "an overpowering impulse within him which he could not withstand," and immediately wrote Cardinal Albani his intention of returning. Only with the greatest difficulty was he prevailed upon to return by the longer route via Vienna. On reaching the Austrian capital Winckelmann was received with great honors, and Prince Kaunitz tried to persuade him to renounce his determination. His emotion grew so great that he lay sick of a fever for days and finally Cavaceppi gave up hope of dissuading him and left. On his recovery he had an

audience with Maria Theresa at Schönbrunn and received from her and Kaunitz several gold and silver medallions as tokens of their regard. A promise was even exacted of him to return the next year to arrange the empress's cabinet. But Winckelmann was counting the days before he could go; he wrote the young Baron von Stosch in Florence that there was no pleasure left for him in this world outside Rome.

To many this sudden determination of Winckelmann to abruptly terminate his long-planned journey has seemed inexplicable. The circumstances of the last few months of his life explain it only in part. He was certainly worn out with his arduous work; two years before he had suffered from fainting fits, and had gone to Anzio for rest, and in March of the present year he had had a recurrence of the same malady, which, as he said, warned him "to bring his house into order." He suffered also from weak eyes and stomach. The fatigue of weeks of post-traveling through scenery which he no longer cared for aggravated the annoyance caused by suddenly breaking into the quiet of his Roman life. The contrast between the joyous Italian primavera and the bleak and lonely Tyrolean and Bavarian mountains brought on a Roman homesickness. Doubtless the memory of the hardships of his youth also came back to him as he approached his old home. But all these things together do not explain his feelings, for they could not have affected to such a degree a strong and healthy nature in the prime of life. However, it is not necessary to see anything mysterious in his decision, a kind of presentiment of evil which came to him in his weakened nervous and physical condition, even if many sentences in the letters of his last few years speak of his expected early death. This Italian homesickness is by no means an uncommon phenomenon. While to most of us the yearnings which draw us to the ancient world remain faint and remote, to

Winckelmann they were strong and insistent. As Madame de Staël says: "He felt himself attracted with ardor toward the South; we still find in German imagination some traces of that love of the sun, that weariness of the North (*cette fatigue du nord*), which formerly drew so many northern nations into the countries of the South. A fine sky awakens sentiments similar to the love we bear our country."<sup>10</sup> Zimmern, in his recent book on *The Greek Commonwealth*, has expressed a similar thought when he says that one must enter deeply into the spirit and life of the south before one realizes the difference in outlook. Even northern poets who have sung of the Southland have done so for the most part as visitors to whom the real spirit of the country has remained largely exotic, even if it arouses their enthusiasm. The gulf in most cases is not bridged by a lifetime: often a northern invader of Greece would finally return home because of homesickness. Many a Frankish baron of medieval Greece left his domain to go home and die by the Loire or Rhine. Thus Otto de la Roche, the first feudal lord of Attica, who "had the Acropolis for his castle and the Parthenon for his minster" left all in his old age and with his son returned to Burgundy to die. Just so Winckelmann swayed between the desire to see the land of his birth and to return to the land of his adoption. His real home was Italy and not the flat steppes of Germany; he was, to quote the words of Goethe, "of an ancient nature reappearing, so far as that is possible, among his contemporaries."

He reached the port of Trieste on June 1, whence he intended to take ship for Venice. The closing scene<sup>11</sup> of his life drama took place in the *Grosser Gasthof* on the Petersplatz. In the next room to his was lodging an Italian

<sup>10</sup> *Allemagne, loc. cit.*, (Wight's translation).

<sup>11</sup> See the little book by von Rosetti entitled *Johann Winckelmann's letzte Lebenswoche* (Dresden, 1815).

adventurer named Arcangeli, who was formerly a cook and who four years before had been sent to prison as a thief. This man had come to Trieste on foot and without luggage and was also awaiting a chance to return to Italy. The two men became companions at table and the Italian volunteered to aid Winckelmann in finding a ship. During the week of waiting the two were constantly thrown together at table, and Winckelmann asked the Italian to visit him in his room, and they also took walks together. It seems strange that such an intimacy could have grown up between scholar and peasant; but Winckelmann wanted to remain incognito and was glad to while away the tedium of the days that passed in talking his beloved Italian, and Arcangeli pressed the acquaintance for his own purpose. With characteristic frankness Winckelmann had shown him the medallions which he had brought from Vienna. The avarice of the Italian was at last aroused by these paltry souvenirs. The last morning while Winckelmann, without coat, cravat or wig, was seated at his table writing a letter, Arcangeli entered his room and the two spent a half hour walking up and down conversing. Winckelmann invited his companion to visit him in Rome and promised he would then disclose to him his identity and show him the palace in which he lived. His mysterious hints as to who he was aroused the suspicions of the Italian, who concluded that he was either a Jew or a Lutheran or perhaps a spy. After returning to his own room, he put a knife into his pocket and again entered Winckelmann's chamber on the plea of recovering his handkerchief. He then asked him again if he would show the medallions at the dinner table and, on Winckelmann's refusing once more, asked him why he was so reticent about his identity. Winckelmann, offended at his impertinence, did not answer, but reseated himself and began to write. Then Arcangeli quickly threw a noose over his head, dragged

him to the ground and stabbed him five times in the chest and stomach. A servant, aroused by the uproar, rushed in and found the Italian over the prostrate body of Winckelmann, who was groaning deeply. The murderer forthwith ran hatless out into the street. Winckelmann lived for six hours, during which he dictated his will and received the last offices of the Church. In his traveling chest were found his favorite authors—Homer, Plautus and Martial. He was buried in the plot of a brotherhood in the churchyard of the cathedral of San Giusti. Later, when his remains were crowded by new arrivals, his bones were cast into the common charnel house. It is pleasing to know that the cowardly assassin was soon caught on the Italian frontier and was brought back to Trieste and tried, and six weeks later, on the same day and at the same hour in which he committed the murder and before the window of the hotel where it had occurred, suffered the punishment of Ixion.

Thus Winckelmann departed from life as poor as he had entered it. But behind him lay his brief, though glorious, life of struggle and service. A more fearful end can scarcely be imagined. The gods, however, were kind to him, for they brought him death near the border of the two countries to which he, half German, half Italian belonged. He was only fifty-one years old and therefore still in the prime of vigor. In the beautiful words of Goethe "he had the advantage of figuring in the memory of posterity as one eternally able and strong; for the image in which one leaves the world is that in which one moves among the shadows." Goethe, then a lad of nineteen, just leaving the University of Leipsic for Strasburg, was eagerly awaiting the promised opportunity of meeting the great Hellenist, when he received the tidings of his death. In a letter which he wrote years after in Rome (1786), in speaking of the emotion which he felt on reading some of the cor-

respondence of Winckelmann which had come into his possession, he said: "How bravely and diligently did he not work his way through all difficulties; and what good does it not do me—the remembrance of such a man in such a place." Walter Pater calls it a calamity that the expected meeting of these two never took place, for thereby German literary history lost a famous friendship. Though a bust of Winckelmann was set up in the Roman Pantheon only four years after his death, no monument marked the place of his passing until fifty years had gone by, when a beautiful statue was erected in the square of Trieste. It was almost a century before his native Stendal set up a monument to its greatest citizen. In 1805 Goethe wrote his *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert*, the title of which rightly appraises the European position of this famous scholar; in 1865-72, a full century after his death, Karl Justi gave to the world the first accurate account of Winckelmann's short life. In these latter years he has received the full meed of honor which his abilities and influence have merited.

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